

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
Florence, OR 97439

Opinion

The First Amendment
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



LETTERS

LETS OPEN UP OREGON PRIMARIES

It certainly bothers me to repeat this again this year, but our elections are not free and open. As another election cycle is approaching, I again realize that I will not be able to cast my ballot for the persons I feel are best equipped to lead our government.

Primary elections are so important, because that is where we, The People, select our candidates to run for office in the general election.

Oregon has a closed primary, so we get a ballot from our designated party and can only vote for those candidates.

I happen to be registered, and have been for decades, as "Unaffiliated." The Independent Party accepts a vote from me and others who are not registered with one of the main parties, but I cannot vote for a major party candidate, because Oregon Primaries are closed.

Do the main parties not realize how many potential votes they are losing because they are protecting their 'party vote'?

Let's open up Oregon primaries so all of us can cast our votes and be a part of this democratic institution.

—Judy Roth
Florence

SUICIDE RATE IN OUR AREA IS UNACCEPTABLE

Florence's suicide rate continues to exceed the national average.

Lane County has roughly 100 suicides each year, with Florence leading the county (per capita) in suicides as the central Oregon coast's suicide capital.

This is more than what is — and what should ever be — acceptable.

Suicide is treatable if good people dare look up from their tech devices to notice others in our community.

Why not be friendly? You never know if it could help prevent a suicide.

Who are the kinds of people committing suicide here? Teachers, seniors at the local lodges, super-market employees and even so-called "suicide tourists" visiting the seaside to end their lives.

One argument is that people have a higher risk of death by suicide because too many of us are hunkered down in our own lives to the point we no longer "see others" due to overuse of information technology.

According to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK [8255]), the best advice for people wanting to prevent suicide is to simply take the time to ask if someone needs help.

And then be there for them and follow up.

Connect to love, hope compassion and empathy rather than technology.

—Dave Masko
Florence

LOCAL WRITER'S SYMPOSIUM WAS TRULY INSPIRING

It occurred to me yesterday that a week had already gone by since I had the privilege to attend the "Words on the Coast" writers' symposium in Gardiner.

The two days I spent driving back home to Monterey, Calif., allowed me enough time to reflect upon its impact and significance. The therapeutic nature of this intense yet delightful experience continues to filter through my recent days spent of catching up with things here at home.

The variety in presentations — and diversity of experiences of both the presenters and attendees — was shared with an honesty and depth that could inspire anyone at any level.

The experience was far more than I expected. Thanks to presentations sharing a clear sense of priorities, well-defined, I can move forward, authentically motivated.

Put me down for next year!

—David Blackburn
Monterey, Calif.
WOTC attendee

ISSUE ISN'T CLIMATE CHANGE BUT ELITIST GOVERNMENT

I raised a child before pampers were invented. *Now*, some cities are outlawing plastic straws — but not pampers.

I lived in Los Angeles in the 1970s — and the air quality is notably better now, due to work on emission standards by auto manufacturers.

The forests burn in California because, by law, the state will not maintain clear cut zones around high-voltage towers and power lines. Rather, they cut power to population areas to deter forest fires.

This is not a sane policy when jobs and civilization depend on electrical power.

The extinction of whales can be prevented by laws that won't allow whale harvesting. However, other things are not as simple. The industrial and technical revolutions were a big deal during the 19th and 20th century. The thinking was that evolution allowed positive change in the make-up of our ecosystem, (including mankind).

However, now the loss of one invertebrate is considered a horror

perpetrated by mankind.

The issue is not "Climate Change," but rather the issue is elitist government control over every aspect of (y)our life: what we eat, what we wear, where we go and how we live.

This is the opposite of liberty and freedom, which are gifts from God.

—Ralph Ray
Florence

AVOID HYPOCRITICAL APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENT

I hope to close the chapter on the continuous letters on CO2-signholding by the road. I'd like to set the record straight on two vital misunderstandings in Debra Walker's Guest Viewpoint response to my letter ("We Can Act Locally And Think Globally," Nov. 6)

First, I wrote sarcastically about "today's most prominent environmental standardbearers." I hope she didn't honestly believe I was primarily targeting friends and neighbors actually out there *doing* the very things I praised.

No. I was referring to celebrity activists flying private jets to hold grand speeches about the sacrifices "we" must make to save the planet, before flying back to their mansions where the garage alone uses more energy than Florence City Hall.

The main point stands: I applaud the local efforts being done, and I have and will continue to help however I can. But I urge us *not* to adopt the hypocrites' practice of shaming regular people for having to drive to work.

The second vital misunderstanding is our ability to affect the global climate. Please re-read my letter, and you will find that I was quite clear on the main concern being China, India and other developing countries. China and India alone have almost 10 times the population of the U.S., both dramatically increasing everything from oil use and coal burning to using plastic and discarding it into our shared oceans.

I stand by my assertion that anyone reading this has absolutely zero say in the matter, and exercising our right to vote here has as much impact on the rest of the world as eating more salad to help an obese neighbor lose weight.

More can be said, so I would like to issue an open invitation to Debra Walker or anyone else interested in continued a civil discussion over coffee. The editor has my contact information. River Roasters is nice, for example. My treat.

—Matt Danielsson
Florence

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Jenna Bartlett
Ned Hickson
Susan Gutierrez
Cathy Dietz
Ron Annis

Publisher, ext. 318
Editor, ext. 313
Multimedia Sales Director, ext. 326
Office Supervisor, ext. 312
Production Supervisor

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or documented will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside the Siuslaw News readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

POLITICAL/ELECTION LETTERS:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) Explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Email letters to:

nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

WHERE TO WRITE

PRES. DONALD TRUMP
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414
FAX: 202-456-2461
TTY/TDD Comments: 202-456-6213
www.whitehouse.gov

OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN
160 State Capitol
900 Court St.
Salem, Ore. 97301-4047
Governor's Citizens' Rep.
Message Line: 503-378-4582
www.oregon.gov/gov

U.S. SEN. RON WYDEN
221 Dirksen Senate
Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
541-431-0229
www.wyden.senate.gov

U.S. SEN. JEFF MERKLEY
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753
FAX: 202-228-3997
541-465-6750
www.merkley.senate.gov

U.S. REP. PETER DEFazio (4TH DIST.)
2134 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6416
541-269-2609
541-465-6732
www.defazio.house.gov

STATE SEN. ARNIE ROBLAN (DIST. 5)
900 Court St. NE - S-417
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1705
FAX: 503-986-1080
Email: Sen.ArnieRoblan@oregonlegislature.gov

STATE REP. CADDY MCKEOWN (DIST. 9)
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1409
Email: rep.caddymckeown@oregonlegislature.gov

WEST LANE COUNTY COMMISSIONER JAY BOZIEVICH
125 E. Eighth St.
Eugene, OR 97401
541-682-4203
FAX: 541-682-4616
Email: Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us